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TAGS: PREL UNSC IZ

SUBJECT: UN AND U.S. AGREE TO SEEK TO EXPAND UNAMI MANDATE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Ambassador Alejandro D. Wolff for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: On June 26, S/I Ambassador David Satterfield led a discussion with the UN on Iraq (including the UN's role in Iraq) as part of an ongoing high-level dialogue. Both the U.S. and the UN agreed that the UN's mandate in Iraq should be updated and expanded, wherever possible. The UN expressed willingness to consider any options for expanding the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), but noted the crucial importance of security and logistic support. Both sides agreed to coordinate closely in the run-up to the August 10 expiration of the UNAMI mandate. End summary.

¶2. (U) Ambassador David Satterfield led the U.S. delegation, and was accompanied by USUN D/POL Counselor Molly Phee, NEA/I Dana Linnet, IO/UNP Maria Germano and USUN POL Peter Kujawinski (note taker). The UN delegation was led by U/SYG for Political Affairs Lynn Pascoe, and included U/SYG for Safety and Security David Veness, U/SYG and Special Advisor on the Compact Ibrahim Gambari, A/SYG for Peacekeeping Operations Jane Holl Lute, A/SYG for Political Affairs Angela Kane, Rashid Khalikov from the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and Ngonlardje Mbaidjol from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

¶3. (C) Ambassador Satterfield briefed on the status of current events in Iraq based on his recent trip with Deputy Secretary Negroponte. He noted that the "surge" was working,

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but that political progress continued to lag. While Egypt, Jordan and Kuwait fully accept the legitimacy of the Iraqi government, the Saudis and the UAE do not. All of Iraq's Arab Sunni neighbors have grown impatient with the GOI's lack of progress on reconciliation; Iran and Syria continue to display no signs of changing their negative behavior in Iraq, and the Iraqis are becoming impatient with Syria's "non action" to stop takfiri fighters. Satterfield noted that the bright spot is Anbar province, where the tribal sheikhs have teamed with MNF-I and the Iraqi Security Forces to go after Al Qaida. With the improved security situation in Anbar, reconstruction is now taking place. Satterfield said that we need to find a way to replicate this type of success in Baghdad and its surrounding provinces.

¶4. (C) Pascoe thanked Satterfield for his overview and turned to possible new UN roles in Iraq. He asked if the United States would give the UN sufficient political space to expand its role in Iraq. Pascoe said that speculation about a possible UN role in Kirkuk and Article 140 issues had been met by coolness from the Kurds. Satterfield said that the U.S. would support an expanded UN role and make that view known to the GOI. He reported that the Kurds had agreed to postpone the Kirkuk referendum and are searching for a way out of the current impasse. This situation creates an opening for the UN. Satterfield offered to preview this with the Kurds; the UN would then engage with concrete offers of

assistance. Satterfield noted that UN assistance on border arbitration would be helpful in areas other than Kirkuk, as well. Pascoe agreed with this approach.

¶ 15. (C) Turning to provincial elections, Pascoe said that the UN preferred that conditions (e.g., registration and a revised elections law) be met before new elections are held. Satterfield agreed on the need for an election law and raised the importance of UN technical advice on alternative electoral models. He noted that Iraqis in the provinces generally are seeking an open list system presumed to create opportunities for local representatives, whereas political leaders in the capital prefer a closed list, which they believe will enhance their control of political posts. The U.S. and UN sides also discussed the prospect of rolling elections, an approach which might lead to greater Sunni participation and greater political legitimacy in the provinces. Satterfield noted the utility of setting a target date for elections in order to encourage Iraqi action on this process. UN elections expert Richard Gee said the UN prefers to focus first on creating the necessary conditions for credible elections and therefore is less comfortable with the idea of setting deadlines. Satterfield replied that setting a target date might help to focus efforts. Gee said that the UN is not opposed to the concept of rolling elections, with Anbar province being the first, but reiterated that any direction on this would have to come from the central government and be expressly supported by the Maliki government. Satterfield recommended that UNAMI brief Embassy Baghdad on its vision and concerns and that the Embassy and UNAMI coordinate efforts.

¶ 16. (C) Gambari reported that agreement had been reached on a secretariat for the International Compact with Iraq. The

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Secretariat will be located within the Prime Minister's

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offices under the direct supervision of DPM Barham Salih.

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Gambari said the UN and Iraq are considering a mid-July meeting in New York on the Compact to update member states at the PermRep level. Satterfield encouraged Gambari to speak with Treasury about this. He praised the Compact process as a model for engaging the Maliki government and ensuring broad buy-in. Satterfield also briefed on the improved flow of GOI funds to the provinces as a sign of progress on budget execution.

¶ 17. (C) Gambari asked Satterfield for his assessment of Iraq's leadership. Satterfield used this opportunity to press the point that there is a real need for the UN to exercise its comparative advantage by providing Iraqi leaders with examples and models drawn from UN experience in other countries on how to address issues common to conflict environments, such as border arbitration, minority rights, election processes, and constitutional questions. Satterfield urged the UN to "forcefully" suggest to Iraqi contacts that there are concrete means to resolve such problems.

¶ 18. (C) Pascoe and Satterfield agreed that the UNAMI renewal must include language to address the UN's humanitarian role. OCHA official Rashid Khalikov said that the current mandate allows UNAMI only to address issues in Iraq, whereas the humanitarian problems have impacted other countries, notably Jordan and Syria. He outlined several areas where the UN's capacity to act is challenged: 1) lack of reliable data on refugees outside Iraq as well as internally displaced Iraqis (IDPs); 2) lack of mobility in Iraq -- the UN's drawdown in 2003 had cut off the UN's connection with local Iraqi communities, hampering the UN's ability to help Iraqis in country; and 3) the GOI is in denial about humanitarian needs and the GOI has yet to disburse the \$25 million pledged in

Geneva. UNHCR funding is not the issue; it's getting reliable information and trying to coordinate efforts remotely from Amman. Satterfield said that the U.S. looks to the UN as a crucial resource and noted the June 26 announcement that Jordan would host the Neighbors Working Group on Refugees in July, suggesting that the UN could channel efforts through the Working Group to further advance assistance to Iraqi refugees.

¶ 9. (C) Veness expressed the UN's appreciation for security support provided by MNF-I to UNAMI. The UN remains concerned about the future security arrangements for the International Zone. Veness said that any change in middle-ring security would need to be fully interoperable with MNF-I. Satterfield stated clearly that any decision regarding the future security of the International Zone will be "conditions-dependent." He speculated that, while it is still our goal to reach a state where we could hand things over, it is unlikely that would happen in 2008 given the conditions on the ground. Veness said that a premature handover to the Iraqis would be a "showstopper" for the UN. Satterfield briefed that Iranian support for increasingly precise and sophisticated attacks on the IZ means that we can expect an increase in rocket attacks in the future but that we are factoring this into our security posture. On middle-ring security, Satterfield urged that both the U.S. and the UN engage with possible donor countries and suggested that, if none could be found, UNAMI might consider contractors. Lute said that the contractor option for middle ring security would "blow the lid off the UN's security budget." Both sides agreed that MNF-I contributing countries would be the best option for political and command and control reasons. (Note: UN officials believe UNSCR 1546, and the annexed letter from then Secretary of State Powell, confer the lead on middle ring security to MNF-I. End Note.). Pascoe reported that Romania had offered to consider contributing its troops for middle-ring security. Satterfield agreed that both the UN and U.S. should assess the viability of this offer.

¶ 10. (C) Lute expressed opposition to potential UN involvement in DDR as part of an expanded UN mandate, saying that conditions now do not merit action. She added that there could also be resistance from members of the Council to such a UN role. Satterfield confirmed that the U.S. has no expectation that there will be prompt Iraqi action on DDR but wants to keep the door open for future involvement when conditions merit it.

¶ 11. (U) S/I Satterfield has cleared this cable.
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